

Infusing Social Bonding into Middle School Programming

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Overview of Presentation

Context of Middle School/Disengagement

Social Bonding defined and discussed

Discussion on Programming

Experiential Exercise

Closing

Today's Context

- Changes in Family configuration
- Outsourcing of Need and Care

Indiana Public School Commissioner said,

“Our allegiance should go to the kids who want to be there and not the kids who don’t want to learn” (Dunlop, 1996, p. 3).

2004 National Conference on Truancy
U.S. Dept. Justice & Education

- Complex problem
- Not focus on attendance alone,
- Must meet "three A's"—school
Attendance, Attachment, and Achievement.

- ❑ One of the top **5** major school problems
- ❑ **1 in every 100** students at-risk of truancy.
- ❑ Age 14-16 it is **1 in every 10**
- ❑ Of every **10** Black men in prison in 2004, **6** were school dropouts

Children unaccounted for in school system

- ❑ **Texas** **140,000** students to truancy per year
- ❑ **New York City**, daily average of **150,000** students
- ❑ **Los Angeles** loses track of over **62,000** students daily
- ❑ **Detroit** truancy investigation rate of over **66,440** per yr
- ❑ **Milwaukee** lose track of **4,000** students per day
- ❑ **Philadelphia** loses track of **2,500** students per day

27 states = **1,572,179** unaccounted children in the US as of 2006

(Center for School Improvement Policy Studies Boise State University)

3 Types Truants (Reid, 1999)

- **Specific lesson absence**-(students skip a particular class, i.e Math, English, or PE)
- **Post registration truancy** -(students register for class as present then leaves),
- **Parental-condoned truancy** -(parent agrees child can miss school for various reasons)
 - ***Current research often lumps all these students together as truants.***

Categories of Truants (Reid, 1999)

- **Traditional** - Shy, has low self-concept, miss school for social conditions
- **Psychological** - lazy, ill, fear of a person miss school for emotional factors.
- **Institutional** - Often leaders; head own peer group and are generally not physically absent from school. Miss school for school contextual factors.
- **Recreational** - activity, incomplete assignments etc.
- **Life-style truants** - Marginal member, give bear minimum, believe it is their right to skip school, emotionally and physically detached for many reason and are more prone to dropping out.

Preparing to Study Chronic Truancy

1 = Cause *Causes of School Disengagement*

1. School-Related Incidents
(Richart, et al. 2003)
2. Zero Tolerance Policies
(Richart, 2001)
3. Inadequacies of the School System
(Kozol, 2005)
4. Student Engagement not Primary Responsibility
(George & Alexander, 1993).
5. Inability to meet Student Needs
(DeMedio, 1991)
6. Little focus on School Context
(Brundrett, 2004)
7. Not engaging Students @ behavioral, cognitive, & emotional levels
(Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Preparing to Study Chronic Truancy

2 = Context

Where?, Why?, When?, Who?

Where?

- In middle school and earlier (Roderick, 2003)

Why?

- Students not engaged in school
- Only academic needs – not psychological/social
- Being pre-disposed to violence (Dunlop, 1996)
- Other reasons as explored in the causes

When?

- After leaving supported elementary schools to go fragmented middle schools (Schulenberg et al., 2004)

Who?

- Primarily children in public schools
- Mainly Blacks & Hispanics (Clark, 1994)
- Gifted students from ‘dumbed-down’ curriculum (Yecke, 2003)

Polk and Schafer (1972)

□if it is “the way institutions relate to young people, and ... [their contributions to the] process that creates youthful deviance, then it is these institutions that must be corrected, not the young who are its casualties” (p.7).

Theory

Social Control Theory

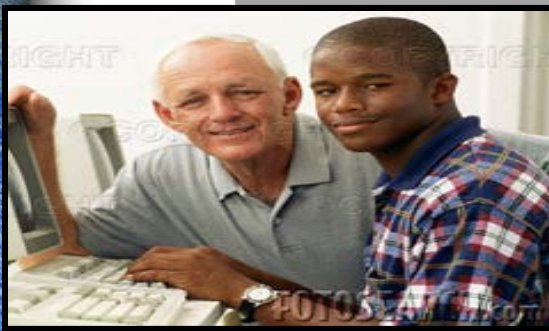
Hirschi (1969)

- ❑ Major theory in understanding delinquent behaviors.
- ❑ Examine connections to people in the creation of a relationship and important factors in delinquency
- ❑ Considered **first theories to examine school social bond** as a primary predictor of delinquency

4 Elements of Social Bond

1. Attachment
2. Commitment
3. Involvement
4. Belief

- ❑ **Higher presence of four elements, the higher the level of social bonding**



Attachment:
Affection and sensitivity
to others

Commitment:
Investment in
conventional society or
stake in conformity

**Hirschi's
Elements of
Social Bond**

Involvement:
Being busy, restricted
opportunities for
delinquency

Belief:
Degree to which person
thinks they should obey
the law

Need for Programming

1. Of over **3,717 studies** carried out in middle schools, **only 1/3 were quantitative**,
2. None were replications of previous studies,
3. **Only 4 examined middle schools' climate and environment** on students' bond to school and achievement (Backes, Ralston, & Ingwalson (1999); Felner et al. (1997); Lee & Smith (1993); Mertens, et al. (1998).
4. “One can count on one hand those that identified programs, policies, and practices related to **student outcomes** that can be generalized” (p.11).

Multiple Questions Measured Constructs of Social Bond

Attachment <i>8 questions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide someone for students to turn to in time of need 2. Provide socialization opportunities with other students 3. Provide activities that foster a desire to stay in school 4. Provide opportunities for good role models for students 5. Provide student interaction opportunities with role models. 6. Provide opportunities for students to build school pride. 7. Provide a safe environment to build positive relationships 8. Generally request and use student input
Commitment <i>10 questions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage students to come to school 2. Use more in-school rather than out-of-school punishment options 3. Offer extended extracurricular opportunities for academically at-risk students 4. Offer on-going and seasonal extracurricular activities 5. Offer various community-linked and school campaigns to encourage in and out of school 6. Offer opportunities for student participation 7. Provide opportunities for student leadership 8. Encourage students to have a stake in their education 9. Foster and value students' creativity 10. Reward students for following school rules and policies
Involvement <i>7 questions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage students to keep busy under adult supervision 2. Encourage parents to participate in their child's learning 3. Encourage teachers to spend time with students at-risk 4. Encourage student participation in school decision-making 5. Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities 6. Encourage student participation in student governance 7. Create opportunities for all students to get involved
Belief <i>9 questions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our school structure and policies are perceived to be generally fair and equal 2. Our school structure and policies show the value for remaining in school 3. Our school structure and policies encourage respect for teachers and authority 4. Our school structure and policies encourage students to believe teachers are basically good 5. Our school policies have clear written rules and related consequences 6. Our school structure and policies encourage consistent enforcement of school rules 7. Our school structure and policies encourage students to advance their education 8. Our school structure and policies encourage students' belief in themselves 9. Our school structure and policies generally enforce that the law should be obeyed

General Study Findings

(Descriptive)

Does Well

- ❑ Building opportunities for attachment and involvement in their school

Thematic Responses based on Measures of Social Bond	Total % from each rank
<u>Opportunities for Attachment</u> “great student-ratio, mentoring,, provide role models, kind teachers, and safe environment”	50
<u>Opportunities for Involvement</u> <u>(attendance)</u> <i>“activities, strong extracurricular programs, sporting events, group gatherings, and field trips”</i>	34
Opportunities for Belief (<i>rewards etc.</i>)	9
Opportunities for Commitment (<i>membership</i>)	7

General Study Findings Cont'd (Descriptive)

Areas for Improvement to build students' social bond

Categories	Valid % per Rank
Relationship Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings, • Survey of student interest, • Reaching all kids, • More opportunities to get involved, • Reaching out to disengaged students more deliberately, • Time with staff, and • Be more sensitive to student perception of fairness and equity among others. 	50
Life Skill Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching respect • Student empowerment • Socialization skills 	12
School Environment Enhancements	10
More Parent Involvement	9
More Teacher Involvement	7
Academic Related Programs	7
Other	5

Discussion on Programming

- This next section is the experiential portion.
- We will
 - Use the instrument to rate our schools
 - Determine area where least effective
 - Develop 2 programs to respond to the area of least effectiveness.

Developing Programs

OUTPUT framework

- **Outcomes**
- **Unit of Responsibility**
- **Treatment/Intervention**
- **Preferred Strategies & Costs**
- **Unit of Analysis (*Recipients*)**
- **Timeframe**

True social bonding takes place after class



Questions & Remarks